

ing. They enter my system majestically, and slowly float through—and out. They pass without leaving a trace—yet I'm dazzled. It's odd. . . . But this Drum Fish and prophet thing has gone on so long in the world: it's so deep in our web of reactions and old human ways.

When any of the habits and folkways of men are persistent, it is probable that they are connected with some inner need. An editor who doesn't know, himself, why he behaves as he does may be following some sound ancient instinct that's wiser than he. Maybe men in the mass will not listen to an ordinary man's natural voice, and actually want him to raise it, and dress in some robe. Or maybe he knows if he didn't the crowd wouldn't pay him. That would be the economic interpretation of an editor's grandeurs.

Suppose neither of these causes is present and he still won't speak man to man, but insists upon calling himself something else. He may still have a reason. There may be a hidden need in his own heart of wearing a toga. In order to speak roundly in public, perhaps he must first dress up, to reassure some inner sinking hesitation, some qualm.

So he speaks of himself as The Statesman, and uses the "We," and struts most contentedly, bless him, through the world of today. Perhaps in the world of tomorrow there'll be less masquerading. Imagine the delight then with which they'll look back on our landscape and study these picturesque figures marching grandly about it—The Argus, The Guardian, The Sentinel, The Eagle, The Sun.

CLARENCE DAY, JR.

## Letters from Two Russian Physicians

Kharkov, January 7, 1922.

*My Very Dear Brother:*

. . . . So you say you had no letters from us since the last of 1917? No, I have written quite frequently, even after the eventful October in Moscow, when my life, like that of many thousands, seemed to be hanging by a thread. . . . The struggle between the Bolsheviki and the defenders of the Constituent Assembly was long and furious, for days the city was under heavy fire, a number of buildings were destroyed to the foundations. And the fires! the dead! the wailing of women! And after this the burial of hundreds of students, officers, revolutionists. I was living then by the Nikitsk gates, where the fighting was especially hard. And right at that moment letters and telegrams began to arrive from the frightened folks at home, commanding me to drop everything and hurry home. Out of pity for father and mother, I left Moscow, with regrets. "X" got a month's leave, and we set out for Kherson which we reached after many interruptions by snowdrifts and breakdowns in December. We remained in Kherson for the whole winter, because of the German occupation of Ukraine. We went through a bombarding of the city which lasted fourteen days. I can't describe all the horrible details; it was worse than Moscow, and a hundredfold more difficult to bear. Our poor old father and sick mother could not rest, lying down dressed because of the fear that the house might be hit or set on fire at any moment. While the Germans were

in Kherson, "X" and I went back to Kharkov where he was serving as a physician and neurologist, and here in Kharkov we still are.

After the Germans, there was Petliura, then the Volunteers under Denikin, then the Bolsheviki again. At Kherson, there was a large detachment of Greek and French soldiers. Well, not wishing to surrender the city to the approaching Bolsheviki, or from other calculations, they gathered hostages of war, drove them into the wooden grain-sheds along the river-front, and, at the last moment, after meeting with defeat in the open, they poured inflammatory liquids on the sheds and fired them. I got news from home with heart-breaking descriptions of how mothers fleeing from the fire lost their children in the flames, how husbands lost their wives. These barbarians from the west had rounded up whole families, like cattle. . . . But now we are free from changes in government, and the present Soviet power is seriously embarking on the work of reconstruction after years of war destruction. The task is immense, the conditions of life insupportable as a nightmare. We are never through here with epidemics, typhus, etc. . . . Statistics declare that the epidemics have caused the death of fifty-five percent of our physicians. Many a man's death remained unknown for five and six months. And well has Dr. Igumenov expressed himself on this score, at the burial service of Professor Hirshmann, that "we have a post office, but no letters; telegraph poles, but no telegrams; railways, but no trains." It takes us three days to make the trip between Kharkov and Kherson, where it used to take only twenty-two hours, and that is bound up with danger to life because of the bands of marauders, notwithstanding the fact that the government is struggling hard to eliminate them. . . .

During these years, which separated us from you, we have lived through so many frights for the sake of our old folks. Now mother falls ill, now father. Both are getting on in years, and are growing feeble. Father, of course, felt deeply the loss of everything he had. One freighter is rotting somewhere in Odessa, one is somewhere in Rumania, two are lying broken in Kherson, while the fifth freighter has disappeared entirely. Even if he should get them back, he could make no use of them, because it would take millions to repair them. . . . All other property, including furniture and other household goods, have been requisitioned, taken away. When father asked that a few chairs be left to him, the youngster who came with "the mandate" blurted back, "You've been sitting long enough in these chairs; you can now sit on the floor." My little sister flared up at this, and told him to hold his tongue and not to dare to speak to an old man like that. He threatened to place her under arrest. They carted away her piano, although this was later rescued and returned, thanks to the interference of a friendly commissar living at our house. In those days, when all "bour-joui" were arrested, father was also thrown into prison, at four in the morning. You can imagine the state of everybody while he was in the prison cellar, but happily he did not meet with the cruel fate of thousands of innocent people who perished because they happened to be well-to-do, employed the labor of others, or for other reasons. They released him after the fourth day. We tried to induce him to leave, to go away, but he would not hear of it, in spite of our simulated threats that we would go away and leave him behind, alone. And so we are all here, in poor Russia. . . .

Kherson, such as you remember it, does not exist. It is deserted, dead. There is no trade, no employment, and no steamers are seen in the port. There is great hunger even here. Black bread (not pure rye) costs now 25,000 roubles a pound; potatoes, 14,000; butter, 80,000; sugar, 60,000; and so forth in the same scale. Things are very hard to get, the markets are almost empty. As soon as darkness comes, all stay indoors and venture nowhere, from fear of being held up and stripped of their clothing. The water mains and the electric system are out of order. People carry water from the river now. . . . Our folks keep warm, living in one room where there is an iron stove, which also serves for the preparation of meals. Here is the wood, too. Here the kitchen, work-room, sitting-room. . . . This short sketch is sufficient to give you an idea of our peaceful civilization where we breathe freely and think our high thoughts. You must not be surprised if we allow ourselves to look longingly towards the West, yearning to be where there is some human existence, where one can live and think. At first I hoped that we could somehow get away, but now I hope no more. What shall be, so be it. Here, with the endless sick, with the suffering, we find our work and our duty.

You write that the hatreds of war are slowly passing away, and that an era of peace is surely coming again. But, darling, you, living there, who have not experienced one single day of our seven years, you cannot imagine what our life is like, how things look here after seven years of war and revolution. We need not one year, not two, but decades for Russia's regeneration, and the latter would be possible provided the foreign governments give their recognition to Soviet Russia. But if things go on as heretofore, then the next decades will also vanish darkly, fruitlessly in the shadows. If we have breathed to you of emigration, it was not for love of personal ease and comfort. It is this terrible intellectual and moral isolation which is so unbearable; we yearn to study, to read, to refreshen our minds with something new and vital. But now, it is work all day long, then home, light the fire in the stove, cook a meal, eat, wash dishes, scrub pots and pans, then bed at midnight till breakfast, then to work again. Day unto day—the same routine, broken only by the arrival of our state ration, by a visit to markets, by cutting wood in the yard. That's the life of Russia's intelligentsia. It is not hunger that oppresses us younger folks, but isolation, the lack of all contact with science and things of the spirit. We appear slow-thinking, like heavy brooding animals,—really! And such work! Each physician seems to do the work of several. In the evening we have our personal wants to attend to, and there is no leisure for study and thought for us who have to play as cook and chambermaid; there are no servants in Russia today. . . . And when I look back, the brain goes cold. Seven years of my young life for study and progress lost! We have grown old and weary, many of us neurotic. How often I thought, and was happy at the beauty of it, that you can live, work, read, in a human environment. Yes, it is hard without culture, thought, science. . . .

No, you will never adequately understand and feel our Revolution, no matter how I try to depict it to you. One must experience it all, in person. I, too, never understood the terrors of the French Revolution reading about it in books; I know it now. Our Russian Revolution has surpassed everything. . . . You can see for yourself that I can hardly answer where I want to be. If I but knew

that America and the other great powers would meet us in a friendly spirit, extend to us a helping hand, so that our civilization could climb to its feet again, life here, it is quite possible, would become fair again. But so long as Russia is not accorded recognition, we shall be rolling downwards. Don't forget that in the Volga region alone there are 36,000,000 hungry and starving. Add to these the starving five provinces of southern Russia. . . .

And while millions are starving, speculation in life's necessities is unbounded, unchecked, brutal to excess, and bribery is flagrantly open. One's hair rises in horror. People of our training and life, sensitive of their honor and conscience, naturally find life hard and unsatisfactory. . . . Our expenditures run into millions. We spend now ten million roubles a month, "X" and I, and life is getting dearer and dearer. Pretty soon we shall be in need of a million a day for necessities. We are not like you fellows over there counting your dollars in tens, no sir! Give us millions, "lemons," as we jokingly say. I tell you, frankly, that we have no need of anything; in fact, we manage to send a little food or money home to our old folks every week, whenever our good acquaintances are going south. But if you do send anything, send only food and clothing, especially food, for that's worth more than anything else; don't send us money by a purchase of roubles at official exchange rates. Our only thought is to make it easier for our folks. Possibly we will get the food you spoke of, but we have not received it as yet. . . .

Kharkov, January 12, 1922.

Many, many thanks for your letter. For the first time we get a letter from America direct, unregistered at that! What progress, just think of it! It reached us in one month's time. The Lord be praised! Maybe, it is really a portent of improvement and coming life in Russia. Well, we live, as my little wife is writing to you, so-so that is, we are still clothed and we don't starve yet—that's of first importance—and we work eighteen hours a day! We look after our stomachs, and let our souls thrive as best they may. There is really nothing surprising that people have grown cruel here, selfish, dishonest, indifferent, to suffering. It is very hard to describe our existence, so deformed it seems, so primitive. . . .

Let's take a small corner of it. From the beginning of the Revolution, the new system of remuneration introduced was "natural" wages or payment in goods, in order to drive out the evil bourgeois medium, "money." But in the end, we had both goods and money. For instance, I as physician and neuro-pathologist, attached to the state clinic (until the very recent regulations, no private clinics were permitted), used to receive one pound of black bread daily, which was often inedible, and also monthly one pound of sugar, two to three pounds of some meal, one to two boxes of matches, and a tiny piece of soap. Wait, I forgot to specify one pound of salt, also monthly. In money, I used to get 2,200 roubles monthly, when bread costs 2,000 roubles a pound (that pound of bread advanced to 5,500 the first week in December). How do you like that for compensation?

But now, with the inauguration of the "new economic program," or "NEP," my ration is one pound of black bread daily, two or three pounds of meal, but not every month, one-half pound of sugar a month (none issued during the last three months), one pound of salt (also none dis-

tributed), one-quarter pound of soap, and one to two boxes of matches a month (but none for the last three months). In money, I now get 200,000 to 300,000 roubles. Black bread, in Kharkov, sells now at nearly 15,000 roubles a pound. It is clear that one must have 5, 6, 10, 15 clinical appointments to pull through. We usually sell our black bread, and buy some gruel or fat. At present I have four jobs, and hope to have a fifth soon. My wife has two positions. Private practice is at a low ebb, as everybody is too poor to bother about health, unless it be a case of typhus or apoplexy when the doctor is willy-nilly called in. At first our government aimed to guarantee the whole population free medical aid, and abolished all former private and corporate hospitals and clinics, establishing in their places a set of free clinical ambulatories. But with the change to "NEP" the government is renting out a part of the medical clinics to individuals and societies, reducing its staffs, and fast returning to the past, catching its breath at every step back. . . .

You should see how our citizens are dressed! Fashions are long forgotten. Men and women wear the same kind of heavy military shoes; the same with overcoats. Rarely, rarely does one come across a decent suit in the street. In fact, one would feel out of place and confused by dressing decently, for fear of being shouted down as "bourjoui." Still, with "NEP" there is hope that men will begin to be decent, friendly. Oh, "NEP!" All our hopes are with thee! Don't think from what I say that I am opposed to the present régime. I swear, that is not the case. I have experienced many changes in government, and a better one than the present I have not known. Still the stupidity and the naïveté of officials, their proletariat chauvinism, is endless. There are many enemies of the Soviet working in its institutions, boring from the inside, consciously spoiling and obstructing, stealing, taking bribes openly and secretly, from the living and the dead, from individuals and whole societies. And what funny stories we have about it all! Perhaps you will think that a government employee who is entitled to one-half a pound of sugar a month actually receives it in full. No, my dear one, don't be so simple! The ration comes originally from the central state warehouses, here the Kharkov Consumers' Society. Those in charge of distribution make a fat living by short-weighing. The K. C. S. delivers the ration somewhat short to the Provincial Health Department (Gubsdrav), and from there, after the customary deduction in weight, it is sent to the Committee of Ambulatories. This Committee in its turn sends the ration to the Master of Provisions (Zavkhosam) at each individual ambulatory, and that functionary takes a substantial pinch of his own tribute. Finally, the lean and hungry state employee gets his one-quarter instead of one-half pound of sugar, if he gets anything at all. True, the Soviet is waging a severe campaign against these hold-ups, but to tell the truth, without success. They steal even more diligently, and will be stealing, as the cost of living continues upward.

What awful things hunger does to us! Men are beasts, would not share a piece of bread with another. And bread is scarce. In the spring, or next summer, only the lucky few will have bread a-plenty. Foreign help is just a drop in our ocean of misery, and it seems that Europe and America are oblivious and indifferent to the millions of the hungry and dying people silently praying for help. And side by side with this dance of death, handfuls of speculators are amassing hundreds of millions of roubles, earning enough for hundreds of human beings, while the best and

the noblest die in silence from hunger and disease. We never seem to be through with epidemics here. There is no end to our woes, and yet what we say here to you is only a spark of an immense fire. . . .

Kharkov, February 9, 1922.

Yesterday we got your first package of food sent through the American Relief Administration. Ah, what a wonderful, glorious day it was, brother mine! Flour, rice, sugar, fats, condensed milk, tea,—weighing a total of over three poods. According to our market prices today, this package is worth eight million roubles, at a minimum, but I am sure it is worth more. And yet, you paid only ten dollars for it in New York. It ought to be clear to you what terrible waste there is in buying money remittances at official rates. I have previously written to you that the ten pounds sterling which you transmitted through London, at the official rate of 450,000 roubles per pound, on December 23rd last, by telegraph, was only delivered to us on January 18th. And what could we do with 4,500,000 Soviet roubles! It is ludicrous to tell you. At that time the purchasing power of this "vast" sum of roubles was expressed in two poods of rye flour at 1,500,000 roubles per, and ten pounds of sugar at 110,000 per, with enough left for a few matches. That is what your good forty-two odd American dollars could do in the Russian markets. Compare that with your A.R.A. food remittance worth ten dollars! Of course, you could not know then that within a month's time the rouble would be so devaluated because of the scarcity of food in the markets and other reasons. Here is one illustration: the price of one egg advanced, between early December and January, from 1,500 roubles to 12,000 roubles. Today it costs 15,000 roubles. Surely, you don't require further proof. Besides, the official rate of exchange is always lamentably below the market open exchange. So don't send us money,—only food, all that you can. . . .

I have before me father's two letters, of January 8th and 27th. He writes that with the coming of winter and the interruption of communication with other points, hunger is growing at an alarming rate. Children are crying for food in the streets. In one day, forty were buried who died from hunger and exposure. The dead are lying unburied in the streets and are not carted away. There is a great shortage of fuel, and no lack of open plundering and thieving excursions. There is neither bread nor water, nor light nor fuel. . . . Think of that beautiful city of nearly 80,000 starving, with their water mains out of repair. The old City Hall recently burned down and nothing could be done to save it, for lack of water. . . . Father thinks himself comfortably well off, because he still has about three poods of flour at home, of which he uses a little every day, but fuel is almost at an end. He humorously adds that only the air is left now, and that, too, is pestilential. . . . You see that your American food is a Godsend and your dollars will keep them warm for the next month, as I have at once relayed the money to them with friends. Kherson has no bank now, where it had a dozen in the past—our romantic golden past. . . . People are fleeing from the provincial towns, flocking to the larger centres, as Odessa and Kharkov, which are better supplied. The towns resemble cemeteries rather than living habitations; only the speculators live and thrive, for nothing seems to daunt or weaken the constitutional resiliency of



that race. Our speculator is as eternal as our hunger and wants are eternal and endless. . . . Of course, father still has faith in Providence and prays that the people may pull through the next two or three winter months. Mother is able to sit up, and to prove to us that her health is improving, she has scrawled three lines in a very shaky hand. She says: "You must not worry about us, my children! You know father; he loses his courage and fears death. And why should we fear death? One dies once—only once. Now, take good care of yourself."

You ask about Clare, whether she is ready for the university. I can hardly answer that question. Our little sister has been ready for the last three years and only the terrible national upheaval and the sickness of our aged parents have kept her at home, where she is nurse, cook, chambermaid, dishwasher, and general manager. But here is her own answer to your question, as she put it to me: "Yes, tell brother I am ready, three times ready; and if this year passes as the last three, I shall be four times ready, ad infinitum ready, but only for the University of Culinary Arts, in which I have become proficient at cutting wood, heating and polishing stoves, dishwashing, etc. We may not get degrees for that education in Russia as in progressive America, but I am ready, nevertheless. Also tell him I don't want to leave Russia; that is, I see my future only in our socialistic paradise, especially if I am guaranteed that that future will not materially deviate from the present." Don't feel hurt at that; Clare can be very droll and serious by turns. When I was home last October, there was a student paying court to her, and notwithstanding her obvious indifference to his advances, would insist on spending his money to buy her things. Once she suddenly appeared all rouged up in high style, and the poor lad, thinking to please her, went to great expense in buying her toilet articles. She used to resell them, and invite him home for his meals. She feels quits now, because she turned his hard-earned money to better account than the silly lad could do for himself. So you see she is capable as well as droll. . . .

Times are getting worse everywhere, and God knows how this will end. With all my self-reliance and common sense and coolness that I can command, I seem to begin to lose ground under my feet. If the blockade is not lifted this coming spring, if foreign help is not more energetic until the next harvest at least, and especially if Soviet Russia is not recognized, I doubt strongly what will be left of us here. I have not the power to describe to you the condition of our population. The plain, blunt fact is that prices are rising daily and hourly at a mad and furious rate, and that food is getting to be scarcer and scarcer. We, the strong and young, will somehow live through this chaos, but it is terrible to think about the old and the children. . . . This evening, on my way home, I passed an old peasant woman on the street. She was wailing to herself, swaying sideways, then backward and forward, as peasant women do when they are possessed by sorrow. It seemed as if all Russia was inside of her body, tearing and torturing her soul. And I suddenly felt this million-headed country inside of me, from Petrograd to Vladivostok, from Archangel to Astrakhan, the terrible sorrow of the people crying out within me. I wanted to stay by this old woman and wail with her to the skies so that the Almighty could hear us. But I thought of the clinic, where I had more sick waiting for me, and I ran as fast as I could. How it will end, I don't know. We don't know anything, and so many, so many begin to cease to care.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### Sixty-five Dollars a Month

**S**IR: In the March issue of *World's Work* appears an article by Mr. Floyd W. Parsons entitled *What of a Coal Strike?* Mr. Parsons in arguing that non-union miners are better paid than union miners, and in proving his contention writes as follows:

"For many months unemployment has increased in the organized fields, while production has shifted to the non-union mines, where the wages are more in keeping with the times and the rates paid in other industries.

"For instance, let us take the organized New River fields in southern West Virginia, and the unorganized Pocahontas district, lying close by in the same state. In the former, the mining rate has been 83 cents per net ton, while in the latter field it averaged about 52 cents. But the New River district has only worked 36.5 days in six months, while the Pocahontas mines have been operated 74.7 days. Assuming that each miner in the districts produced 10 tons for every day he worked, the New River miner would have earned in six months a total of \$303, while his brother worker in the non-union mines of the Pocahontas field would have earned \$392."

Disregarding all controversy concerning the right to organize or the benefits thereof, it is a terrible commentary on the state of the coal mining industry to find that miners, even the best located, are receiving only \$392 for six months' work, about \$65 a month. This is so far below a living wage, below even the cost of living necessities, that it is not strange that the newspapers are full of appeals for aid for the starving miners. It is not merely difficult, but practically impossible, for a man to support a family on \$65 a month, or even worse on the \$50 earned by union miners. Such a situation is intolerable and denotes a precarious condition that may lead to discontent, privation, and possible abandonment of the occupation.

Out of curiosity, I would like to know if the coal mined at 52 cents a ton is sold to the public cheaper than the coal mined at 83 cents a ton, or if the country pays the same for both, the difference disappearing in the shuffle, later to reappear on some company's books as profit.

P. J. SEARLES.

Indian Head, Maryland.

### Responsibility for the World War

**S**IR: In liberal journals recently the "The Myth of the Guilty Nation" has been subjected to severe and largely just criticism. The more tenuous "Myth of the Innocent Nation" is open to the same treatment, for in case of national wrong-doing the guilty and the innocent are both in evidence and involved in the same fate. But there is a tendency to use the proof of positive guilt or of careless negligence on the part of individuals in the Allied powers to palliate the greater crime of actually bringing on the war. Certainly the various letters of harassed and equivocating diplomatists on either side may be used to prove anything or nothing. Every great nation has its imperialists who welcomed war as a means of restoring their waning prestige. "Foreign war is the swift remedy for internal unrest or failing patriotism." The appeal to greed and to herd-instinct is after all a mere camouflage of the real purpose of war-making, which is a back-fire against democracy. In Germany the forces of privilege were stronger, better organized and nearer the throne than in any other country. The actual fact is well summed by Dr. Alfred H. Fried in his *Philosophy of Blame*. I translate a passage:

"Every nation has its advocates of Imperialism, Chauvinism, Nationalism, and Militarism, but in Germany alone have these doctrines been unfolded without limit, developed without check and set off by no bar from the power of the state. The result is all the more tragic because before the war began a change for the better had been felt in Germany. Only another decade, perhaps half a decade, and the catastrophe would perhaps have been avoided."

DAVID STARR JORDAN.

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